

PRESS RELEASE

# **Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$85,000 in Workforce Development Grants for Inmate Re-Entry Programs**

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Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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**BOSTON** — Five organizations will receive funding to design job training programs that would assist formerly incarcerated citizens reentering the workforce, the Baker-Polito Administration announced today in awarding more than \$85,000 in Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program grants.

The Bristol County Sheriff's Office, Central Massachusetts Center of Business and Enterprise, Greenfield Community College, Massasoit Community College and MassHire Lowell Workforce Board will each work with partners over three months to design programs providing employment support services to the formerly incarcerated. The proposed programs would aim to create pathways to securing employment for the returning citizens with business partners in the industry fields of cut and sew, precision machining and manufacturing domain, machine operation and diesel technician.

"These partnerships will leverage community-based organizations to help those who have served prison time support themselves and their families, while assisting businesses in filling positions that require high-demand skills," said Governor Charlie Baker. "Through this program, we can create stability for our citizens, our communities, and our economy."

"Helping these citizens achieve sustained employment can reduce their risk of recidivism and put them on the path to prosperity," said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.

"Addressing these barriers to reentry is a crucial component in our efforts to create partnerships at the local level to create stronger communities.

The Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program is an outcome of the Baker-Polito Administration's Task Force on Economic Opportunity for Populations Facing Chronically High Rates of Unemployment, chaired by the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Rosalin Acosta.

The Task Force found that individuals within prison populations experienced complex needs that require intensive interventions for them to be successful in securing and maintaining employment. Access to adequate re-entry services was identified as a barrier to employment that disproportionally impacts the target populations and leads to greater recidivism.

“Unemployment is highest for the formerly incarcerated in the first two years after their release. These efforts will help reduce recidivism during those critical times,” noted Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) contracted with Commonwealth Corporation to administer funding to support re-entry programming.

“27 percent of formerly incarcerated people are looking for a job but cannot find one, and the numbers are even worse for people of color and women,” Commonwealth Corporation President and CEO Dr. J.D. LaRock. “We need to do all we can to provide better pathways for those looking for work to high demand jobs.”

The following is a complete list of the organizations awarded Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program grants:

**Bristol County Sheriff’s Office - \$17,000**

The Sheriff’s Office plans to work with Dartmouth House of Corrections, Dartmouth Women’s Center, the Ash Street Jail and the MassHire Bristol Workforce Board to engage returning citizens in the manufacturing industry, specifically training clients in the cut and sew industry, ideally leading to placement at either Merrow Manufacturing or Matouk,

**Central Massachusetts Center of Business & Enterprise - \$17,000**

The Center plans to work with the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office and MassHire Central Regional Workforce Board to engage returning citizens in the advanced manufacturing industry, specifically training clients in the precision machining and manufacturing domain, ideally leading to placement at either Riverdale Mills, Corp. or Omni.

**Greenfield Community College - \$17,000**

The college plans to work with the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, Hampshire County House of Corrections and MassHire Franklin-Hampshire Workforce Board to engage returning citizens in the advanced manufacturing industry, ideally leading to placement at either Deerfield Packaging Service, Inc. or Sisson Engineering as machine operators.

## **Massasoit Community College - \$17,000**

The college plans to work with the Plymouth County House of Corrections and MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board to engage returning citizens in the transportation and moving industry, ideally leading to placement at either Milton CAT or Patriot Place Waste Management as Alternative Fuels and Emissions certified Diesel Technicians.

## **MassHire Lowell Workforce Board - \$17,000**

The board plans to work with the Middlesex Sheriff's Office to engage returning citizens in the advanced manufacturing industry, leading to placement at either Excell Solutions or Consolidated Sterilizer Systems as CNC Machinists/ Machine Operators.

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## Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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EOLWD manages the Commonwealth's workforce development and labor departments to ensure that workers, employers, and the unemployed have the tools and training needed to succeed in the Massachusetts economy.

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